

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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ODE.

CONCORD, JULY 4, 1857.

O tenderly the haughty day
Fills his blue urn with fire;
One morn is in the mighty heaven,
And one in our desire.

The cannon booms from town to town,
Our pulses are not less,
The joy-bells chime their tidings down,
Which children's voices bless.

For He that flung the broad blue fold
O'er-mantling land and sea,
One-third part of the sky unrolled
For the banner of the free.

The men are ripe of Saxon kind
To build an equal state,—
To take the statute from the mind,
And make of duty fate.

And, henceforth, there shall be no chain,
Save underneath the sea
The wires shall murmur through the main
Sweet songs of *Liberty*.

The conscious stars accord above,
The waters wild below,
And under, through the cable wove,
Her fiery errands go.

For He that worketh high and wise,
Nor pauses in his plan,
Will take the sun out of the skies
Ere freedom out of man.

—*R. W. Emerson.*

PRAYER.

There is a beautiful meaning in the old myth of Bethel. That spot wherein a man's soul has ascended the angel's ladder of prayer is sacred to him evermore, be it beneath the starry sky or beside the peaceful bed where God "giveth his beloved sleep," by the bank of the quiet river or under the glittering shadows of the woods, in the gloom of the solemn cathedral nave at eventide or in the floods of the glad sunlight which bathed through some long summer Sabbath a rich garden's stillness,—in that spot, wheresoever it be, an altar is builded by the busy hand of his memory; and again and again, in life's journeyings, he may offer up there the sacrifices of a grateful or a contrite spirit. God will make it blessed to him thus to keep cherished in remembrance the holy joys his love has once vouchsafed.*

Nor has time less power than place to bring good influences to our souls. It is one of the most beautiful instances of the identity of human nature's religious senti-

*This seems to have been early felt by the Brahmin pietists: "Let the person who desires to worship the Deity in his mind choose a spot by the banks of a river, or in a field, or near a grove, or in a cave, or near a waterfall,—at any rate, in a secret spot, where he can remain undisturbed."

ment, acting under every varied circumstance of age and clime and creed, that men have continually consecrated the same hours of the day to the worship of God. From the spontaneous sense of their appropriateness, the morning and evening prayer have found their place in every ritual and in every heart.* Nothing can be more natural than that the children of the Father in heaven should thus offer to him the greeting of their first waking thoughts, and ask of him his blessing ere they rest in his wide arms of love. Nothing can be more fit than that the workers in God's great vineyard should thus commence each division of life's task with a prayer for help and guidance, and close it by a review of their imperfect labor, by contrition and thanksgiving.

These things follow so simply from the relations we bear to our Creator and Lord that I think morality may fairly ask to show, if we forsake them, some cause why such natural and holy habits should not approve themselves to us. And, further, the morning and evening prayers are not only natural to us, but manifestly exceedingly useful in aiding our virtue and piety. A large amount of sin and error in the world results from the unprepared way in which we continually rush into duties and temptations, without any previous attempt to look those duties and temptations in the face, or form the deliberate resolution of meeting them aright. Roads of life which we shall walk in all our days, professions, marriages, pursuits of all sorts, are undertaken in the most headlong manner as regards their moral aspects, even when worldly prudence has balanced with accuracy all their pecuniary and social advantages. Much less are regarded the smaller details of daily life, the business or the pleasure which the morning sees lying before us in the coming hours, and on whose good or evil performance or enjoyment the evening must look back to rejoice or to repent. If we desire heartily

"To feel, to think, to do
Only the holy right,—
To follow no step in the awful race,
No blow in the fearful fight,"—

must we not look all these things, as I have said, straight in the face? Must we not arm ourselves beforehand for the combat whensoever it threatens, and bind our iron mail of resolution most closely where we know it oftenest fails, and grasp with the strong uplifted hand of prayer that "Ithuriel spear" which God will give to each loyal and valiant will in his great host of souls?

And this must be done definitely, distinctly,—not idly dreaming, as some seem to do, that there are duties too small to talk about to God, as well as blessings too small to thank him for. He requires the duty, and gives the blessing; and that is enough to raise both of them into place in *man's* poor worship. Vagueness in prayer, as in all other religious matters, is feeble and null. Such resolves and petitions as this: "O Lord, be pleased to help me to perform my duties of the day," has not half the power of this: "I ought to do to-day the particular impending duties, a, b, c, and d, and to resist the particular impending temptations, e, f, g, and h. I *will* do what I ought. Father of spirits, aid me to use the powers thou hast given; and, if I fail, make me ere night repent." * Prayers of this sort track the whole line for our plough to work, and it will be strange if the furrow of the day be not straighter than

*The Parsee morning prayers were full of the spirit of virtuous resolution. See *Zend-Avesta*, vol. ii. p. 9. At daybreak,—"*Augmentez la pureté de mon cœur, ô Roi!*" (*Ormuzd*, "*que je fasse des actions saintes et très-pures. Je prie avec pureté de pensée, avec pureté de parole, avec pureté d'action; ô Dieu, Juge excellent, grand, je me repens de mes péchés. Je crois sans hésiter à Dieu et à sa loi. Mon âme sera céleste, l'enfer sera comblé à la resurrection.*" While fastening the girdle,—"*Dieu est Un; la loi de Zoroastre est vraie; Zoroastre est le vrai prophète; je suis résolu de faire le bien.*" Three times aloud,—"*Venez à mon secours, ô Ormuzd!*"—*Jescht Sadé.*

The Hindu Code also ordains that a man should "waken in the last watch of the night, and reflect on virtue," and that, having risen and purified himself, he repeat in the morning twilight the beautiful *Gayâtri*,—"I adore the majesty of that Divine Sun, the Godhead, who illuminates all, who gives all delights, from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress toward his holy seat."—*Inst. Menu*, iv. 92, 93.

*The Jews have a tradition that Abraham ordained the morning prayer, Isaac that of mid-day, and Jacob that of the evening. Maimonides says that Esdras first regularly appointed prayer at the hours of the morning and evening sacrifices. He is supposed to have composed the eighteen beautiful prayers in the *Mishna*, to which was afterward added a nineteenth (full of curses on heretics), probably the work of Gamaliel.

one which began with only a vague glance at the distant guide-post.

If the "Golden Verses" were really the work of Pythagoras, we might trace back to the dawn of Greek philosophy the discovery of the gain to the economy of human virtue to be obtained by the practice of nightly self-scrutiny.* In any case, men did not wait long to find that he who seeks "to know himself" must study day by day the details of his moral health, and that he who desires to lay up "treasures in heaven" must allow no waste of his soul's wealth to pass unheeded.† And, for religious as well as moral use, nightly prayer has its peculiar power. Sleep has in it so much of the helpless, trustful dependence of childhood,—it bears so strong a resemblance to its solemn antitype, God's messenger, Death,—that the mind which feels not somewhat of tenderness and somewhat of sanctity in slumber must be insensible, indeed. When we lie down to our rest, we disrobe ourselves of all the proud prerogatives of our rationality, our thought and feeling, and free action in the world of sense. We give them all back into God's keeping, trusting that he will guard us, and sustain our animal life, while we lie powerless; that he will make our own hearts beat for us while we are incapable of motion; will think of us while we cannot think of him; and that, when his morning sun rises on the just and unjust, he will give back to us the splendid regalia of our humanity, our crown of reason, our sceptre of freedom, and send us forth once more, "heirs of the earth and skies." We all do this practically every night. Is it not senseless to have no consciousness of an act so affecting? Surely, we might make the gentle boon of sleep altogether a holy thing, a blessing to be received always, as if a mother's soft hand were closing our eyes, and our last dreamy thoughts nestled in the infinite pity of her heart. It was a beautiful thought of that old Moslem who told us to prepare for

sleep as for prayer, and to yield to forgetfulness with the supplication: "O my God, unto thee do I commit my soul, unto thee do I look up with longing and fear [reverence]. With thyself only can I find refuge from thee."*

There is another hour besides that of morning and night which has commended itself to our feelings of humanity, less from obvious fitness than the other two, but more from the immediate hallowing influence of nature. That the sunset hour should be consecrated alike through the wide plains of Islam and the realms of Roman Christendom; † that the East should answer by one great prayer the muezzin's proclamation of God's inviolable Unity, and that the West should bow in reverence as the vesper-bell peals for the adoration of the Man,—God's mother, ‡—is there not something wonderful in this chain of worship, which link after link rolls out over all the lands after the setting sun till the round world is girded by its zone of prayer? There must be a true inspiration to guide such sympathy in creeds so various. The Lord of nature and of the human heart must himself have harmonized the evening's sacred summons to our ears, to make us all thus understand it aright. And, verily, he hath done so, and blessed that Sabbath

* Solwān, by Ibn Zaffer, c. 1.

† The evening twilight prayer called *Reih Ras* is appointed in the *Tunkha Nameh* for all Sikhs, and the second repetition of the *Gayātri* to the Hindus, in the *Inst. Menu*, iv. 93. Huc makes this curious remark: "There exists at Lha-Ssa a very touching custom, and which we felt a sort of jealousy at finding among infidels. In the evening, and just as the day is verging on its decline, all the Thibetians stay business, and meet together, men, women, and children, according to their sex and age, in the principal parts of the town and in the public squares. As soon as the groups are formed, everyone kneels down; and they begin slowly and in undertones to chant prayers. The religious concerts produced by these numerous assemblages create throughout the town an immense solemn harmony, which operates forcibly on the soul. The first time we witnessed this spectacle we could not help drawing a comparison between this pagan town where we all prayed together and the cities of Europe where people would blush to make the sign of the cross in public."—*Huc's Tartary*, p. 194.

‡ "Vespers is the only popular service [in the Romish Church at present]; and that, in connection with benediction, seems to be put forward by English Ultramontanes as the congregational service of the Roman Church of the future."—*Christian Remembrancer*, No. 70.

* "Suffer not gentle sleep to close thine eyes
Ere thou hast thrice reviewed the labors of the day.
What hast thou learned? What done? What
duty neglected?"

For the evil thou hast done, repent; for the good,
rejoice."
—*Golden Verses*.

† "When a man goeth to bed, he ought first to
take unto himself the kingdom of heaven."—*Sohar*.
Genes., fol. 103.

hour of the day, and hallowed it! The red sun's slow decline makes the earth one grand and gorgeous cathedral gleaming from west to east with the purple and golden lights of heaven's vast blazoned oriel. Each vale and lake becomes a censer, sending up its clouds of dew laden with the perfume of the closing flowers. The sweet choir of the birds sing out of their clear hearts their pure, childlike hymns ere they flutter to their rest, and leave a pause, calm and soft and solemn through all the evening air. The hush of the night wind passes away over the sleeping woods like a solitary chord swept slowly upon a far-off organ. Then the world is still. One by one the lamps of the holy stars are lighted high up through all the shadowy arches of the sky. Nature's majestic fane waits but for the kneeling worshipper before the altar of the Lord of All.

Nor is there aught less sacred in the dim closing of the autumnal eve, when the gloom sinks down lower and lower overhead, and every sound is still, and round us lies only the dull scene of withered ground and turbid pool and trees half shrouded in their mouldering, sere leaves and looming vaguely in the gathering shade. No longer now we stand in the glittering cathedral of the Christian world, but in nature's Karnak or Stonehenge, weird and sublime in its dim grandeur as those old Druid temples where in the twilight of the ages knelt the fathers of our race. Surely, their great faith is even now in its noblest part our own. Surely, in scenes like these it springs again within their children's souls,—that high and holy faith that beyond all earth's decay and desolation reigns a living Lord, and that when our winter-life here hath passed away there shall arise for us an everlasting summer-time of holiness and joy, in the love of that Mightiest One in whom now and forever we have our being, and to whose world-wide arm we cling, even as the mistletoe clasps its parent oak.*

* Hesus, "the Greatest and Best," the supreme God of the Druids, was honored by them under the emblem of an oak. The mistletoe was used to typify the relation held to him by man, who is derived from God and exists in him, yet is of a nature altogether inferior. The Druids taught that human life is a progress from "Abred," the state of evil, to "Gwyneyd," the state of knowledge and felicity. Cæsar mentions the extreme fervor of

It is surely an unwise and evil thing to slight these worship calls of nature, to check and crush our own purest instincts. To many of us, unhappily, the following of them is nearly always impossible; to others, often difficult. But, when it is actually compatible with the other duties and necessary business of life, why should we not as eagerly avail ourselves of the aid to devotion which nature offers as we should do of the inspiring words of some great saintly human soul? The Hindu deems he sins if he turns from his five sacraments, the Romanist from his seven, the Protestant from his two. Christian, Moslem, Guebre, Brahminist, think they offend if, while the sacred words of Bible, Koran, Zend-Avesta, or Veda, are read, they withdraw from the sound. But God's own wondrous sacrament, wherein we may all feed our souls on the mysteries of his glorious works, and commune in holiest feast of love with his Spirit,—God's own Scripture, the writing, ay, the autograph itself, of his almighty hand traced all over this world-Bible,—who heeds how he neglects these, who fears to excommunicate his soul by turning away from such God-ordained means of grace?*

their faith in immortality. It is worthy of remark, as proving the originality of that faith as a natural growth in the human soul, that the three most powerful religious systems of the ancient world, which seem to have been most purely *indigenous* to their respective countries,—namely, Brahminism, the Egyptian worship, and Druidism,—were precisely the creeds which set forth most distinctly and emphatically the doctrine of a future state.

* "For, if God had given instruction by means of books, he who knew letters would have learned what was written, but the illiterate man would have gone away without receiving any benefit; and the wealthy man would have purchased the Bible, but the poor man could not have been able to obtain it. Again, he who knew the language that was expressed by the letters might have known what was therein contained; but the Scythian and the Barbarian and the Indian and the Egyptian, and all those who were excluded from that language, would have gone away without receiving any instruction. This, however, cannot be said with respect to the heavens; but the Scythian and the Barbarian and the Indian and the Egyptian, and every man that walks upon the earth, shall hear this voice. And of the things that are seen there is one uniform perception; and there is no difference, as is the case with respect to languages. Upon this volume the unlearned as well as the wise man shall be alike able to look, the poor man as well as the rich; and, into whatsoever land any one may chance to come, there, looking upward toward the heavens, he will receive a sufficient les-

The rule of our conduct in these matters must, I think, be this: whensoever and wheresoever the desire to pray to God, or return him thanks, or offer adoration to him, comes spontaneously to our hearts, let us, if possible, obey the impulse there and then, and let us place ourselves again and again under the same hallowing influences. Let us in no case slight or thrust aside any such feelings, from habits of routine. The principle of keeping religion in its own time and place (as if all time and all place were not its rightful domain!) is, I suppose, rarely admitted by any one who is religious at all; but, still, the practice of setting apart regular hours and churches for private and public worship has a tendency which ought to be guarded against, to *limit* the performance of such acts to those appointed moments and places. It is hard for any human being to understand the feelings of others on these topics, and presumptuous to counsel where we cannot understand. Yet this I would fain be allowed to say: temples built with hands are doubtless very dear and sacred to those who can find in them continually the blessed sympathies of social worship. The solitary chamber, where we can "pray to our Father which seeth in secret," is, to many a heart, dearer and more sacred still. But a great loss is sustained when the church and the chamber monopolize all our better hours, and "nature's domes of worship, earth and air," never behold us looking upward through the blue expanse of day or the starry heights of night toward him

"Whose temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies."

It is easy for all of us, except the dwellers in cities, to do this sometimes alone, and receive the numberless gentle influences by which God draws our hearts to himself through his beautiful creation. Would to Heaven that it were also possible for us to do it sometimes with our brothers! Is it a dream that the time is not very far away when men feel that the sectarian differences which must long divide their ordinary worship need not and ought not to do so always? What if some few simple words of thanks and adoration, some short prayer for God's

son from the view of them."—*St. Chrysostom, Homil. IX.*

Spirit of Love, could be agreed on by the severed folds of Christendom, and that once, say only once, in a year, in the soft summer time, we could all meet in that fane of the free air which no sect can wall in for itself, and in each parish through all lands, make some quiet spot the temple of all,—*all*, from the Romanist even to the Theist? Would not that little glade or rocky nook be dearer for the rest of the year than proudest church or narrowest chapel?—*Frances Power Cobbe, in Religious Duty.*

THE STILL HOUR.

HOW BEAUTIFUL TO BE ALIVE.

How beautiful it is to be alive!

To wake each morn, as if the Maker's grace
Did us afresh from nothingness derive,

That we might sing, How happy is our case,
How beautiful it is to be alive!

To read in some good book until we feel

Love for the one who wrote it; then to kneel

Close unto Him whose love our soul will thrive,
While every moment's joy doth more reveal

How beautiful it is to be alive.

Rather to go without what might increase

Our worldly standing than our souls deprive
Of frequent speech with God, or than to cease
To feel, through having lost our health and
peace,

How beautiful it is to be alive.

Not to forget, when pain and grief draw nigh,

Into the ocean of time past to dive

For memories of God's mercies; or to try

To bear all nobly, hoping still to cry,

How beautiful it is to be alive!

Thus ever, toward man's height of nobleness

Striving, some new progression to contrive,

Till, just as any other friend's we press

Death's hand, and, having died, feel none the
less

How beautiful it is to be alive.

—*Henry Septimus Sutton.*

The old religions put God above the world as Maker and Ruler. He issued his commands from that supreme throne to the universe, established laws, and gave orders. He made the winds his angels and lightnings his messengers. He said to his creatures, "Go and do this, go and do that"; and they must not reply, nor ask the why nor the how.

But, when the gospel comes to us, it gives us another view of the Almighty. He is not the mighty monarch now, not the Oriental despot sitting in secluded and awful grandeur. He is the heavenly Father, the ever-present Friend. He is the pervading life, beauty, joy, of the universe. He lives undivided, he operates unspent. He fills the flowers with their beauty in the depths of the eternal forests; he is in the immeasurable smile of the far-rolling ocean; he warms in the sun and refreshes in the breeze; he descends into the smallest insect to give it its happy day of life, and he cared for the soul of the trilobite in the oldest geological epoch as certainly as he cares for your soul and mine to-day. He is the safety of the universe. Nothing can fail, nothing can go wrong, while he is above all and beneath all, and around all and within all. Myriads of angels and archangels, of powers more majestic than our thought can conceive, serve and obey and love him. But he can also descend in sympathy to the lowest forms of life. He cares for the cherubim and seraphim, and he cares for the animalcule of the tropic seas.

The highest act of the human intelligence is to know God. It seems almost incredible that the finite mind should be able to conceive of an Infinite Being, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, from whom and through whom and to whom are all things. No wonder that some are perplexed by the grandeur of the thought, and say that they are atheists. The wonder is that this faith in an eternal Supreme Being should be the most deeply rooted of all convictions in the heart of man. Living in this little moment of time, we cannot help believing in worlds without beginning and without end. Standing on this minute point of space, we are obliged to conceive of an infinite universe, without bound or limit. Sure to die in a few brief years, we are conscious of immortal being. Does not this show that God himself speaks in our heart, and that we know him because he knows us, and reveals himself by a light within the soul?

There is but one fatal heresy: it is that which limits the power, the wisdom, or the love of God.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

Matthew says that Jesus (after the four thousand had eaten) "sent away the multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came into the borders of Magadan." Mark says "he came into the parts of Dalmanutha."

Neither Magadan nor Dalmanutha has ever been identified. The two names point to the same place, however, and probably stand for neighboring localities. Jesus was still within the boundaries of Decapolis, but in the neighborhood of the Jewish territory; for the Pharisees are said to "come forth," in order to question him.

Matthew gives a somewhat fuller account of this conversation than Mark: perhaps he was present. Luke omits it altogether. According to Matthew, both Pharisees and Sadducees came, and "asked him to show them a sign from heaven." Mark says "he sighed deeply in his spirit," and said: "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily, I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation." But Matthew gives the conversation more fully. This is his answer: "When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather, for the heaven is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day, for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given unto it but the sign of Jonah." And he left them, and departed.

Why was Jesus unwilling to grant the Pharisees and Sadducees a "sign from heaven"?

One reason was that it would not have done any good, and, indeed, would have done harm. The aim of Jesus, the object of his life, was different from that of the Pharisees. They wanted a warrior king, who would drive out the Romans from Palestine. Jesus saw plainly the futility of this idea, and that to persist in it would inevitably result in the destruction of the nation. Had he shown any display of miraculous power, the instant result would have been that the people would have become more urgent than ever to "take him by force, and make him a king." And this was just what he wished to avoid. Ever since the death of John the Baptist he had

been seeking for seclusion, in order to avoid the rivalry with Herod which his friends tried to force upon him, and which he plainly saw to be a desperate expedient. How many reformers have partisans, when they are longing for fellow-laborers!

Withdrawing again and again from these too zealous friends, he now must encounter his enemies. He had first alienated the priestly party,* to which the Sadducees belonged, by his disregard of the Sabbath laws, and his liberality and generosity toward foreigners. The Pharisees of Galilee seem to have been at first more friendly,† but they also were alienated after a time. When these two strong parties, opposed to each other, united, in order to attack and destroy Jesus (Mark iii. 6), his only support was in the common people. The people, roused to anger and filled with the spirit of hatred and revenge on account of the death of John the Baptist, were no longer able to receive a religion of peace and love, by means of which a spiritual conquest could have been gained over the Romans, and the Jewish nation might thus have become in the best and highest sense the leaders of the world.

What wonder that Jesus "sighed deeply" as he looked into those dark faces, and thought of all the harm caused by the hardness of heart and bitter, revengeful spirit,—the lost opportunity, the destruction of his nation, the sufferings of the innocent, the long centuries of cruelty, bigotry, evil of every kind, that has lasted even to the present day. His own death was a small matter to him compared to all this.

"The sign of Jonah": This expression has been variously explained. Compare, however, Matthew xii. 39-42, where there is a similar conversation (or, as is sometimes thought, a different report of this conversation, out of place). It is now thought that v. 40 is an interpolation, as it is inconsistent with the conclusion of the passage. This takes away one interpretation formerly more common than now. It seems almost unworthy of Jesus to make so trivial and prosaic a comparison, especially at so serious

a moment and in the face of the impending crisis.

Jonah was the prophet who preached repentance to the *gentiles*; and they heard him and repented, and their city was saved from destruction. Jesus also preached to the gentiles; but the Jews rejected him, and he foresaw the destruction of the nation. Hence verses 41 and 42, with their expression of intense feeling, the hopeless agony of the last appeal:—

"The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah* is here.

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon* is here." Then he left them, and, "again entering into the boat, departed to the other side" (Mark).

The boat was bound to Bethsaida (probably Bethsaida-Julias,† near the north of the lake).

Jesus had been deeply stirred by the conversation with the Pharisees and Sadducees; and, thinking of it, he now warned the disciples. "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matthew), or, according to Mark, "the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod."

It was not uncommon among the Jews to use the word *leaven* for "spirit" or "temper," and thus it shows some dulness and want of sympathy on the part of the disciples that they could fail to understand Jesus. How could they have listened to the conversation just recorded, and not have been impressed by it? But so it was: they seem to have noticed nothing, and thought the "leaven" referred to was actual yeast, strengthened in this assumption by having brought no bread with them.

This obtuseness and indifference drew upon them a more severe reproof than Jesus often administered,—"Have ye your heart hardened?" according to Mark. Even after the explanation Matthew thinks it is the

* John v. 18, vii. 1, 32.

† It must be remembered that the first five chapters of John, and the seventh, eighth, and ninth, precede the narratives of the Synoptics. John vi. is out of place.

* The Greek is, literally, "more than Jonah," more than Solomon."

† See March number for meaning of Bethsaida.

"doctrine" of the Pharisees which is condemned.

In Bethsaida a blind man was brought to Jesus. Jesus would not refuse to heal him, but he took still more precaution than before against the publicity which his cures inevitably brought upon him. He "took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village." And, when the man was cured, he sent him away to his home, saying, "*Do not even enter the village.*"

Matthew omits this story, but Mark gives it in his usual minute and graphic style, reporting exactly the words of the conversation. "Seest thou aught? And he looked up, and said, I see men; for I beheld them as trees, walking. Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he *looked steadfastly*, and was restored, and saw all things clearly." L. F. C.

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Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall I send such a book to such a person?*" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered

by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

A four-pound package is the most that can be sent by *mail*. The postage on four pounds of *magazines* is 16 cts., on four pounds of *books* 32 cts.

Postage on magazines and all periodicals (weighing less than four pounds), 1 cent for four ounces; on bound books, 1 cent for two ounces. *Paper books* are now sent by mail at the same rate as magazines, *when issued periodically*.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

It is requested that each mother desiring "Gentle Measures in Training the Young" shall write her own request, and also state the number and ages of her children.

It is contrary to our rules to send requests for anything but reading matter. Those who infringe this rule will be dropped from our list.

These books are offered only to those who have not other means of procuring them. Those able to buy, or living in or near a town with a public library, are not invited to send requests.

We ask as a special favor that the friends who offer books would kindly revise their lists before sending them in. We prefer not to print an offer of any book which would not be suitable to place in the hands of young people between twelve and twenty years old. Offers of standard works and educational books we are glad to print. Harmless light literature had better be sent directly to correspondents.

Mrs. Sarah N. Brown, 9 Louisburg Square, Boston, Mass., offers "History of England," Dickens; "English Humorists," Thackeray; Tennyson's "Complete Poems"; a collection of Whittier's Poems; "Idyls of the King," Tennyson.

Any one wishing to communicate with the Cambridge Branch of *The Cheerful Letter* between July and October will please address Miss S. L. Howe, 2 Appleton Street, Cambridge, Mass.

The Brighton Branch offers the following: *Century*, 1883; *Harper's*, 1885; *Youth's*

Companion, 1892, 1894, 1896; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1890, 1894, 1895; Instrumental and Vocal Music. Carrie L. Murdock, Washington Street, Brighton, Mass.

Miss Mary Hawley, 158 Elm Street, Albany, New York, offers the *Forum* for 1895; odd numbers of *Outing*, 1890-96; some back numbers of the *North American Review*.

I would like to have addresses of all who wish patterns for toy animals, such as rabbit, elephant, cat, etc., also a few other things that will amuse children,—doll, chair, wheelbarrow, sled, sofa, etc.

All who wish them send me your names by the middle of the month, and I will send to the first one on the list, they will send to the next one, and so on to the last, who will return them to me. The expense will not be much. Each one will pay postage to send it to the next one.

Will some one please send me *organ* instrumental music (not piano). Something easy for beginners. Also any kind of games for children. Mrs. Carrie Smith, East Peru, Iowa.

The Portsmouth Branch offers the following magazines: *North American Review*, 1891, 1892; *Harper's*, 1892, 1893, 1894; odd numbers 1880, 1887, 1891, 1892; *Cosmopolitan*, 1891, 1892; odd numbers, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895; odd numbers *St. Nicholas*, 1890, 1891, 1892; odd numbers *Scribner's*, 1881, 1887, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892; *Popular Science*, 1890, 1891, 1894; odd numbers *North American Review*, 1891, 1892; *English Illustrated Magazine*, 1890, 1891; odd numbers *Forum*, 1889, 1891, 1892, 1893; *Harvard Graduates'*, October, 1892-April, 1893; odd numbers *Littell's*; odd numbers *Century*, 1884, 1885, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1891; odd numbers *Macmillan*, July, 1891; odd number *McClure*, Christmas, 1894; odd number *Fortnightly Review*, February, 1893; and several others. Address Miss Edith T. Blake, 70 Market Street, Portsmouth, N.H.

Miss Mabel H. Bond, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, current numbers (and four or five back numbers). This is a quarterly.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Magnolia, Mass., has now some more copies of "Our

New Mistress," Miss Yonge; "Anti-slavery Days," James Freeman Clarke. She had a large number of requests for the last books that she offered, and hopes to send something to all in time.

REQUESTS.

READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from:—

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Cayuta, Schuyler County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

The Book Club secretary ventures to suggest that, if all those who are able to pay postage on the books for which they ask would do so, they would probably themselves receive more books, without mentioning the advantage to others unable to pay postage.

Letter to the Editor.

I shall be glad to have you send me copies of the *Outlook* and the *Christian Register* as often as you can, and as many of them as you can. Papers of this kind are eagerly read by the soldiers. And, after reading them myself, I give to the soldiers and others all the papers and other good reading matter I can obtain from every available source, as well as those I subscribe for

myself. I always manage to have a bundle of reading matter for the Guard House (for the prisoners) and the Post Hospital, (for the sick) on every Sunday morning. And, when I can get enough, I take reading matter to the barracks for the soldiers. I also select and hand to individuals what I think will specially interest them. It is a means of doing a good deal of good, and I can use all the reading matter I can obtain (and more than I can obtain) to most excellent advantage.

We have here a large garrison, consisting of three troops of cavalry and four companies of infantry. We are in the midst of a very large Indian Reservation, the Kiowa and Comanche. There are several thousands of Indians all about us,—Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches. Among the latter are Geronimo's band, who are held as prisoners of war, and have been, since the last Indian war in Arizona, some ten years ago. The country is not open to white settlers. We are thirty miles from the nearest railroad, express office, or village, or community of white people. The coming of a respectable entertainment or lecturer is an unheard of thing. We are thus, as you may well suppose, left largely to our own resources. Few places in the United States are now so isolated. With this statement of our own situation and surroundings, you can readily see how gladly we welcome good reading matter from all sources.

As chaplain, I do my work in a broad, generous, and thoroughly unsectarian way.

B. C. HAMMOND,

Chaplain U.S. Army, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Some unknown person sends me *The Cheerful Letter*. I wish to thank them for it. I should be pleased if some one would send me some good reading. *Munsey's Magazine* of this year, or some other, after some one had got through with it, would be gladly received, or some of Rosa Carey's books. Miss Anna C. Ballou, North Tunbridge, Vt.

Mrs. A. B. Tuttle, Kenduskeag, Maine, would be glad of a music book containing the old songs.

Mrs. C. Murray, Perry, Oklahoma, asks for a "History of Massachusetts," "History of the United States," Ray's "Elementary Arithmetic."

"United States History" is asked for by Ernest Hudson, Straw, Wilkes County, North Carolina. Bertha Winkler, Straw, North Carolina.

Mrs. Carrie E. Deuel, South Trenton, New York, asks for Reed and Kellogg's "Higher Lessons in English"; also Swinton's "Third Reader." She will be very glad to get them for her children.

Second-hand school books can be used to good advantage by Mrs. T. J. Philpin, Coalgate, Indian Territory.

May I take this way of expressing my thanks and appreciation for the many papers and books and kind letters sent to me by *The Cheerful Letter* friends? My time is so fully occupied that I am not able to answer quite all the letters or packages of papers. But I wish to say here that I do enjoy them so much, and so heartily thank every one who so kindly contributes so much to my happiness, and especially Miss Ellen Getchell, and many others unknown. I have lately lost my dear invalid mother, and I am so lonely going about my work without having mother's presence with me. I am living on a farm, and it is a very busy time. It is seven miles from any library, and I am unable to receive any reading from them. Mrs. Nellie E. Walker, Hartland, Maine.

Any one having *Woman's World* or *Delin-eator* to offer, will they please send to Mrs. T. S. Beard, Rough Creek, Virginia?

Mrs. Augusta Pushee, Canaan, Maine, a mother of two daughters, sixteen and thirteen, will be very glad of any reading.

The secretary of the Book Club asks correspondents to observe that it is necessary in responding to an offer of a book or magazine to mention the name of the book or magazine. Do not say, "I should like to have *that book*" but "I should like to have 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' or the *New England Magazine*." The person who has written to you has offered a dozen books to a dozen different people, and those who wish to receive one must be willing to take the trouble to write out the name of the one they want. It is not reasonable to expect the giver to take her time not only to write notes offering books which she thinks you may like, but also to keep a copy of every note

she writes, to save you the trouble of writing the name of the book you want.

The editor has received several requests which would have been printed this month, had they gone to the Book Club secretary.

To Mrs. E. A. Kendall, Forestburg, Texas. If you desire correspondents, write to the secretary, Miss Langmaid. See directions in every number of *The Cheerful Letter*. The editor has not time for correspondence, and does not undertake it.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Magnolia, Mass., has received several requests for current numbers of the *Christian Register*, and would like to receive some more offers of the same (not back numbers).

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

TO TEACH CHILDREN TO BE TRUTHFUL.

The only way, in my opinion, to teach children to be truthful is to be truthful yourself, to let them see that you are perfectly honest in your dealings with them. Of course, it is not desirable or even possible to tell children the whole truth on all occasions; but let all you tell be truth, let them see that truth is precious to you, that your word is sacred, and your promise not to be broken. I have reared five children, and that has always been my rule. If I promise them anything, I do my best to keep my promise; and, if anything happens to prevent my doing so, I take pains to explain to them why I am unable to do as I promised. I have frequently quoted and explained to my children the texts in the Bible bearing on the subject. I have taught them to depend upon my word, to believe what I tell them; and, in return, I let them see that I depend upon their word, that I believe them. And if, as has occasionally happened, they fail in the truth, as the best of us will sometimes, I let them see that it hurts and grieves me beyond measure. I explain to them that a falsehood is the mark of a coward, that people tell them because they are afraid or ashamed to tell the truth. I explain to them that it is better to acknowledge a fault and bear the punishment than to conceal the fault and bear the sin. My mother was a truth-loving woman, but

circumstances were such that in my childhood I was left a great deal to the care of negro servants. They told me all sorts of tales,—for instance, that “owls” (owls) would get me if I cried or was troublesome. I knew that owls would catch chickens; and how was I, a poor, little, fearful, ignorant child, to know any better, when told that they would catch me? I slept in a little low bed, under a window. A peach-tree grew before the window; and a small screech-owl used to sit in that tree at night, and hoot. I would lie and shudder at the sound. No one knows how I suffered from fear, was afraid of owls till I was nearly grown, and all for one untruth. This taught me never to tell falsehoods to children. It is cruel, and it teaches them to do likewise. I believe that in some cases falsehood is hereditary, and then it cannot be remedied. I know a lady, a rich man's wife, in a good position, who is deceitful. Her daughter is an out-breaking liar. Her mother reproves her to no purpose. I believe, if sin is indulged in, it grows and widens, and takes such deep root in the soul that it may be transmitted from parent to child, like a mental or personal peculiarity. So, if we wish our children to be truthful, we must teach them by example, as well as by precept, and ask God to help us, which he has promised to do, if we come to him in humility and sincerity of heart. “Keep thou the gate of the door of my lips, lest I sin against thee.”

(MRS.) LOUISE H. GOODWIN.

Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia.

Truth seems innate to some natures. The very transparency of such souls is their own best protection. To others inaccuracy and exaggeration are either natural or so inbred in the character that one cannot choose but shudder. These are the extremes. We, as mothers, rarely have to do with either.

It is the shades of difference that we have to deal with. We must be very careful of our own statements if we wish to have our children truthful. We, fathers and mothers, stand in the place of God to our little ones the first of their lives. They take our example as absolute, perfect. If we exaggerate some statement, ever so little, what more natural than that a child should

think there can be no harm if it tell of incidents it has observed with a slightly accentuated shade of expression. As it is the "little foxes that spoil the vines," so it is the little lies that are such hindrances to the building up of a firm, reliable character.

Study your child. If you perceive a tendency to falsehood in its nature, be wary of rules. Have few "you must not's." Teach the child that a falsehood would pain you more than disobedience. Do not encourage extraordinary stories by even an appearance of surprise. Above all, discourage gossip; and by not listening yourself teach your child that "hearsays" are not "a stock" in your conversation.

But, mothers, beware how you accuse wrongfully of falsehood. Of any one thing that, more than another, tends to harden child-nature, to be accused of falsehood, when innocent, is the most terrible. It is a stamp upon the plastic nature that hardens, and all time cannot remove it. "If mother believed I could tell a lie, what is the use of being truthful?" is the inner comment. But, if as one of our little ones sometimes says, "You have went, and gone, and done it," and later find out your mistake, do not hesitate to make the *amende honorable* as soon as possible. Better to apologize to our child than let the wounded heart go without even the balm of knowing you are convinced you were wrong.

Never, from any cause, tell your child a falsehood. If you do not wish to answer a question or explain an act, tell it you do not wish it to know. But think well before you answer. There are so many things that can be explained so nicely, and the child be so proud and satisfied at knowing.

Especially is this true if a little stranger comes to a family. How nice to introduce it as a part of ourselves, cradled near the mother-heart, a gift from the hands of the Creator! Freely acknowledge your ignorance of the processes that brought about the result, that the "why" is as mysterious to you as to the little questioner. But, if you value your child's good opinion, be truthful as far as you know, and see to it that others are the same. Then, when some schoolmate wishes to impart "a great secret" to your child, he or she can meet it with conscious pride. "Mamma told me"

thus and thus. "I am sure she told me rightly." And who knows what an influence the purer tale may have on the future life of the other?

To a child that sees no mysteries around there is no temptation for the "little secrets" that are the danger signal to observant mothers.

Remember that the architect of character is the one who throws a missile in the ocean of eternity, whose every answering name is a message back from the infinite. The men and women of the future are in our hands; and, this being a fact against which there is no appeal, let our lives be pure, our thoughts pure, and our conversation and acts pure also.

DUDLEY DORN.

There will be no meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange in July, August, September.

The personal address of our treasurer, Miss Louise Howe, will be Box 21, Nahant, Mass., until farther notice. But subscriptions may be sent to her or left for her at 25 Beacon Street, at any season.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Magnolia, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.